1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

return to the *lupanda*, where the initiates are welcomed by their friends. An essential part of the ceremony which takes place at this stage is the exhibition of animal shapes made by the *m'mician*, with mounds of earth outlined in flour. These animal shapes differ from lodge to lodge. On the last night before the return to the village the initiates undergo a ceremonial bathing, each boy being carried to the stream by a woman, who thereafter is addressed as 'elder sister'. Finally, with new names, and freshly oiled and decorated, they march to the chief's village to be redeemed by him from the *m'mician* with gifts of cloth. After initiation it is a deadly insult to call a boy by his child-name. All who pass through initiation together consider themselves bound by mutual obligations of hospitality.[1]

Girls' initiation takes place in three stages. First, there is *ciputu*, the general initiation before puberty, which corresponds to the boys' *lupanda*. It takes place at the same time of year, and though it lasts for less than a week, its conclusion is celebrated at *lupanda* jointly with the conclusion of the boys' initiation. A hut is built in the bush, like the long dormitory of the boys, and four days are spent in dancing and singing. Each girl (aged about eight years) is accompanied by a sponsor, a woman friend who continues to be her mentor during subsequent rites, and who assists in giving the girl instruction in her womanly duties. At the end the girls are bathed and anointed, dressed in new clothes, and each is carried to *lupanda* by her sponsor. Here they prove their skill in dancing and receive gifts from their friends. Ritual defloration follows the *ciputu* initiation.[2] Among Mohammedans, clitoridectomy used to be performed by a woman operator, but, it is said, was discontinued in about 1903 on account of the heavy mortality.[3]

After this first general celebration, first pregnancy and first birth are the occasions of separate rites for each girl. According to some informants there were once two ceremonies connected with pregnancy. One, for the young married men whose wives had not yet conceived, used to take place at the same time as *ciputu*; each man was attended by a woman sponsor not his wife, given good advice, and put through various tests of manhood. Mitchell does not confirm the present existence of this ceremony, but in the old days if a man was betrothed or married to a child going through her *ciputu* he had to accompany her.

The *litimo* ceremony takes place when a young married woman quickens with child for the first time.[4] The woman, with her sponsor and the married women of the neighbourhood, went out in procession for a ceremony of singing and dancing and instruction to the young couple, followed by a feast. Nowadays no men are allowed to attend *litimo*. A child born of a woman who had not undergone this rite used to be buried alive; nowadays her *anyene mbumba* is charged by the chief.

Finally, six days after the first child is born, its naming ceremony forms a last initiation rite for its mother. The husband is formally led into her hut by her sponsor and the married women of the neighbourhood, and the child is taken out for the first time to the accompaniment of feasting and dancing.

Most Yao men and women act as sponsors of initiates at least once, and all parti-

[1] Sources for boys' initiation: Stannus and Davey, 1913; Werner, 1906, pp. 124-6; Stannus, A, 1910, pp. 247-63; Hoeltker, 1933, pp. 19 sq.; Johnston, 1885, p. 409; Weule, 1, 1909, p. 309.

[2] Stannus, A, 1910, p. 259. [3] Ibid., 1, 1910, p. 256.

[4] Ibid., A, 1910, p. 254; Hoeltker, 1933, p. 23, calls it *ulumbo* (belly).

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

843 842 *Pregnancy and childbirth.* An event of the first importance in the Yao world is the first conception or rather the "quickening" with the first child, *Lilime*; this is described below, together with the other ceremonies of the *Unyago*.[1] After the ceremony of *Lilime*, the period of waiting until the birth of the child passes without further event. A point of medical interest is that native women suffer in many cases from "morning sickness" during pregnancy. That they may have perverted appetites is also recognised, grain husks and crabs being among the things most commonly desired. As the Anyanja,[2] the Yao believe that the child develops from the semen of the male, although the growth of the child is in some way connected with the mother.

[71] 844 When labor commences, the woman retires to the bush a few hundred yards away from her house, attended by some friend, seldom a midwife, and never by her own people, though the mother and the mother-in-law will probably be near the spot. If labor is not completed by evening, they return to the house and the birth may take place actually within its walls. [71] The attitude assumed in labor is the same as that adopted by the Anyanja,[3] the patient semi-reclining in the arms of another woman who sits behind, grasping her belly. The vulva is smeared with a dessection made from the bark of the *mpoza* tree as a lubricant, but no other help is given. *Kwaluli* is the name given to the place of confinement; *m'luuli* means the house where the woman remains for a period after the confinement. The Yao recognise the protruding bag of amniotic fluid and call it the "oil-gourd". "*Chisasi chikasiche?* (The oil-gourd, has it broken?)." They wait until the placenta is delivered before dividing the cord. This is done with the sharp edge of the outer covering of a maize stalk or sugar cane; a knife is never used. The section is made near the placenta or half-way between it and the child, after tying the proximal end with a bark string.

The woman who receives the child at birth is the *ambuasapa*, friend or godmother. If the infant is born in the bush, she carries it back to the house whither they go as soon as labor is completed. The mother herself, unless she is very ill, goes out shortly afterwards and buries the placenta in the ash-heap, using a stick to dig the hole, never a hoe.

845 After the birth, the mother and child must remain in the house until the umbilical cord separates, during which time the husband does not enter, though he may come to the door to look in at the child.

[852] [853] [302] The day on which exit from the house is made, the floor is entirely replastered with mud. The baby's head is shaved and a cross is made upon it with *mpemba*, a kind of red pigment. The husband may then receive the child and in the case of a first-born, it is he who gives it its name; other children may be named by the *ambuasapa*, the mother, or the aunt.

When the mother leaves the house to appear in public, the *salasapa* who put her *lilime* on,[4] removes it.

So long as the infant remains in the house, care must be taken as to persons allowed to handle it. A woman who has recently had a menstrual period or coitus with her husband,

[1] Vide infra, p. 274. [2] Stannus, op. cit., p. 310. [3] Ibid. [4] Vide infra, p. 274.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

or a girl who has just returned from *Chipudu* must not touch the child, as it is said, "Her body is hot and would give fever to the child." To guard against such a happening, some "clean" woman, after handing some beads to the mother, will ask to be allowed to take the infant. This indicates that should it sicken, the beads will pay the medicine-woman who comes to cure it. The mother and baby are simply washed in water and are not treated with medicine, unless meconium has been voided before the child was delivered.[1] If the infant dies before it is presented to the outside world, it is disposed of in the same way as a stillborn child, i.e. buried in the ash-heap. About the tenth day, the baby is adorned with a girdle of beads and two little pieces of stick obtained from a medicine-woman to make the infant grow fat.

The length of time during which the father and mother refrain from cohabitation after the birth of a baby varies greatly according to circumstance. Four months is probably a minimum, while two years, during which the woman suckles the child, is the common interval. After the first coitus, the man and woman wash themselves and the baby is bathed in the same water to prevent any ill coming to it.

Suckling often continues much longer than two years. If the mother dies, the child may be suckled by the grandmother, an aunt, or some other woman, but the breasts must first be treated with medicine or the child would die

A child born breech first is called *salanga*, a word which is also used to denote a variety of domestic fowl which always has the appearance of having its feathers ruffled. A child who dies before the father and mother have resumed sexual relations is buried in a graveyard apart from that of adults. The grave, dug with sticks, not hoes, is very shallow, and when it is filled in, a heap of stones is made above it. Only women attend the burial. A deep grave would cause the mother to go on losing children at an early age. The body of such a child is called *litwee*, "hyæna."

A woman dying undelivered is placed in the grave in the usual way and then, before filling in the earth, one of the grave-diggers descends into the pit, cuts through the enveloping shroud, and incises the abdomen. One end of a long bamboo stick or reed is inserted in the incision and the other end is brought out to the surface of the grave. If this were not done, "many would die in childbirth."

Twins are not killed by the Yao but are well treated and always cared for equally. They are given similar clothing and food.[1] There is a story that the mother of Nkwamba,

[1] Chinguru, vide infra, p. 288.

[2] (T. A. Werner, 'Among the Congo Cannibals, by John H. Weeks, London, 1913, a review,' *Man*, vol. 14, no. 18, 1914, p. 102.

I take this opportunity of referring to Miss Werner's review in which, speaking of twins, she says, "They are always among the Anyanja given the names *M'apili* and *M'pama*." *M'apili* in Chinyanja refers to a kind of musical instrument and the Chiyao meaning is "unmusical pulse." *M'pama* is a Chiyao word which certainly means "the bush." It is sometimes used of the second born twin but does not occur in Chinyanja. I have never heard of twins either among the Wayao or the Anyanja spoken of by these names. A mother carries the first born on the right arm and the second born on the left, but, so far as I know, she does not give a duplicate greeting nor make a habit of using equally with both hands.

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909) 1910 FT7 Yao FT7
Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4

Women wear their cloth folded across the upper level of the breasts from right to left. Men and women often have two cloths, one over the loins, only the second fastening over the chest. M Y N 291

A menstruating woman also wears a small piece of calico corresponding to a diaper supported by string round the waist.[1] The same thing is worn after childbirth for six months. Angoni women always wear them. M Y N [841] [846]

The Angoni, Chipeta wear their cloth toga-fashion, carrying a fold of cloth on the left arm. An Angoni chief wears three such, blue, white and coloured, the first outside, the last next to the skin.

The material used is now practically everywhere European-made calico, formerly bark cloth only was used by Nyanja, though weaving had been accomplished by Angoni, where skins were and are used as articles of clothing. M Y N [246]

There is nothing to distinguish men of various grades, etc. Fashion at the present time is very capricious—some patterned cloth being much worn one month will have no sale a month later; this is true both of men and of women.

There is no class uniform, and no "costumes" are worn save in dancing (*q.v.*).

Men are now seen wearing a piece of calico twisted up on the head in turban form, a custom lately introduced from the coast—the only indigenous head-gear is the string skull-cap worn by Angoni widows. N [589]

Under the heading of dress must be included the bead aprons worn by Yao and Angoni. Among the former the use of this garment is restricted to the women, who in the house sometimes wear nothing else; among the Angoni the children often have them and no other clothing.

Sandals are sometimes made of skin and fastened on the feet with a thong when crossing thorny country.

Among Angoni the *mawdo* only used to be worn; this is a small hard-cased fruit which was hollowed out and worn just covering the glans penis. N 291 824

FOOD, ETC.

The staple food throughout the country is either maize or rice, the latter only at various spots on the lake shore where it can be grown. Two fixed meals per diem are taken, at 9 or 10 a.m. and again at 6 p.m.; each consists of *nsima* porridge made from maize flour or rice flour or boiled rice with some *ndiwo* (relish) to which the salt is added. At odd times the native will eat anything that opportunity offers—a piece of cassava root, a boiled sweet potato, a roasted maize cob, etc. M Y 262 [264]

The *nsima* is made by stirring flour (*ufa*) into boiling water till a stiff paste is formed; this is kept cooking for five minutes and then scraped out with a wooden M Y 252

[1] Diaper or *mchelo*: a woman keeps five or six; they are never put away in baskets but always hung up; a woman changes every time she bathes, using two or three per diem; they may be given to a female child to wear, but are then not worn again by a woman.

6: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1947) 1949 FT7 Yao FT7

844 believe that she will die. The man's representatives are therefore able to establish the child's paternity from the birth-pang confessions of the woman.

846 The child is kept in the hut where it was born, for six or seven days, while the umbilical cord dries and falls off. During this time (*lusili*) the child is unnamed, and [553] it is named only when it is taken out of the hut. Should it die during this period of seclusion it remains unnamed and is referred to by a special term (*lituya*, pl. *matuya*). [128] I have therefore been able to enumerate live births by means of the distinction made between miscarriages and still-births (*kwatanga*) and children who lived long enough to be referred to as *matuya*. After the birth of the child the woman may not have 846 intercourse for four or five months. To do so would be to endanger the life of the [854] child with a disease called *ndaka*,[1] which is contracted by a sexually inactive person 834 when he comes into contact with a sexually active person. The husband may have intercourse with a second wife, but must take care to medicate himself so that he does not endanger the life of his child. When the child is about 4 or 5 months of age the parents perform ritual intercourse and medicate the child against the mystical dangers of sexual activity; sexual relations are then resumed.

834 The Yao say that a second child should not be born while the first is still being [853] suckled. Since lactation continues for about two years I am uncertain whether monogynists remain continent, as they say they do, or whether *coitus interruptus* is 464 practised. It is quite usual for husbands to become labour migrants when their 842 children are still very young. I have known women to write to their husbands who are away working and tell them to return because their children have 'grown', i.e. have been weaned. Labour recruiters had difficulty in recruiting men immediately after the soldiers had been demobilized at the end of the war, because the women objected, saying that they had remained childless long enough and the men must first wait until children were born. However, actual examination of birth-dates [163] shows that children are sometimes born within a year of one another and sometimes there are quite big gaps. The two-year gap between children is probably an ideal which few attain.

3. The Estimation of Fertility

(a) *Sundbaerg's Age Divisions*

128 As a preliminary estimate of fertility, Sundbaerg's trichotomy of ages may be considered. The argument behind this division of the population into Youth, Middle Age, and Old Age is that those populations with a high proportion of youth have a greater tendency to increase. Table V shows this trichotomy for the Yao with the same material for some other populations shown for comparison. Where the gross reproduction-rate is known for the period shown in the table, this is included.

128 At any one time a certain proportion of the population is absent from the area, 162 usually at some labour centre. Hence the proportions of the population are distributed abnormally. In all there appeared to be a total of sixty-three men, women, and children absent from the hamlets, who would otherwise have been living there. Hence in Table V these have been included in the totals in the 'Yao with absentees' proportions.

[171] [1] A disease of this sort is believed in by many Central African tribes. Among the Nyanja-speaking peoples it is known as *nsanjiko*.